

## *C-17 maintenance unit reaches milestone*

**Story and photos by  
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*376th AEW Public Affairs*

The maintainers of Air Mobility Command's 817th Expeditionary Airlift Squadron, Detachment 1, C-17 Aircraft Maintenance Unit, recently accomplished something that has never been done in one standard AEF rotation.

On Sept. 2, the unit supported its 1,000th combat sortie.

The unit, whose members are deployed from McChord Air Force Base, Wash., and a few from other C-17 bases, are responsible for maintaining

and repairing all of Manas' C-17s.

"We have supported missions that have delivered more than 20,000 cargo tons and more than 26,000 passengers since May, almost 50 percent of OEF's airlift support in the past 4 months," said 1st Lt. John Barry, officer in-charge.

Although the 1,000th was a routine airlift mission, it was a big moment for the maintainers who supported it.

"The same crew, with the same aircraft, on the same mission, can fly more than one sortie in a flying period," said Master Sgt. James Winston, a shift production superintendent. "But it is this team's maintenance that gets

the jet out and home again, successfully, and most importantly, safely."

For these maintainers, the milestone simply means they are doing their job.

"I am very pleased of the job I'm doing," said Staff Sgt. Jeremy French, a jet engine mechanic. "Knowing that I fixed the aircraft that is making a direct impact in the Global War on Terror makes me feel that I'm doing my part, no matter how small."

"Little things like this show just how much doing my job affects the war," said Airman 1st Class Elizabeth Galvin, a hydraulics mechanic.

The unit has also supported a variety of mission types, including Manas' first combat airdrop.

"It was an experience I'll will never forget," said Senior Airman Chris Johnston, crew chief.

Airman Johnston spent 18 hours preparing the Aerial Delivery System and Logistics Rails that enabled the cargo to be airdropped from the aircraft without any problems.

"I've worked on many airdrop missions before, but I can't remember a mission where so many people banded together to make the mission go. Seeing it first hand was awesome," he said.

According to Tech. Sgt. William White, a communication and navigation specialist, he has seen a lot of growth in the Airmen that have come through Manas.

"They've grown in their job and have more appreciation for what they have," said the Reservist from the 446th Airlift Squadron, McChord AFB. "They realize that every aircraft that goes up is supporting a real mission, and not just training. It's delivering vital cargo and passengers that are in the heart of freedom's fight."

"I am very proud of my team and the work they've done," said Lieutenant Barry. "Not only have they met the challenge and worked the most demanding caseload a deployment like this has seen, but they have also done their part to make Manas better for those who come after them."



*Senior Airman Nathan Harsh, maintenance technician, checks the electrical system during a C-17's pre-flight inspection. The 817th Air Mobility Command, Detachment 1, Aircraft Maintenance Unit supported its 1,000th combat sortie Sept. 2.*